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NIE 36.2-56

17 July 1956

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# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

## NUMBER 36.2-56

(Supersedes the sections pertaining to Iraq in NIE 36-54)

# THE OUTLOOK FOR IRAQ'S STABILITY AND FOREIGN POLICIES

*Submitted by the*

### DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.*

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NEXT REVIEW DATE:

AUT. HA 70-2

DATE: 7-01-81 REVIEWER: CC9256

2016/01/11

79R1012. 76

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## THE OUTLOOK FOR IRAQ'S STABILITY AND FOREIGN POLICIES<sup>1</sup>

### THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments with respect to Iraq's internal stability and foreign affairs.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Iraq is unique in the Arab world in its political stability, its effective management of a substantial economic potential, and its collaboration with the West. While this is in great part the work of 68-year-old Prime Minister Nuri Said, he has the support of a considerable body of Iraqi leaders. There is, however, considerable discontent among other politically aware Iraqis. (*Paras. 6-10, 19-22, 25-28*)

2. As long as Nuri remains active he is likely to dominate the Iraqi scene, and no radical changes in Iraq's relationships with the West are likely. Iraq will probably remain in the Baghdad Pact and avoid dangerous flirtation with the Soviet Bloc. However, Nuri will almost certainly put various pressures on the US and UK to strengthen the Pact and to confer greater benefits on Iraq as a member. (*Paras. 8, 10, 26-35, 43*)

3. Nuri's policies are likely to increase Iraq's isolation in the Arab world. Iraq's relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia are likely to remain strained. Present

trends in Syria and Jordan are unfavorable to Iraq and will probably provoke increased Iraqi overt and covert attempts to reverse them. However, we believe that Iraq is not likely to intervene militarily unless convinced that this would be the only way of preventing a take over of Syria by militantly anti-Iraqi elements, or of removing an imminent threat to the Hashimite throne in Jordan. Even in these circumstances Iraq would be unlikely to risk military intervention without the backing of substantial political and military elements in the country concerned, or without prior consultation with the UK and probably the US. (*Paras. 27-30, 36-41*)

4. After Nuri's disappearance, moderate elements would probably initially retain control. However, a struggle for power among moderates and between them and extremists would almost certainly ensue and lead to political instability. (*Paras. 13-16, 34*)

5. Any successor regime would probably make greater concessions toward Arab unity, including de-emphasis of the

<sup>1</sup> Supersedes the sections pertaining to Iraq in NIE 36-54, "Probable Developments in the Arab States," 7 September 1954.

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Baghdad Pact to the point where Iraqi participation would be virtually nil. However, the chances of Iraq pursuing such a course would be substantially less-

ened if another Arab state joined the Pact or if additional Western support for the Pact resulted in increased benefits for Iraq. (*Para. 34*)

## DISCUSSION

6. Iraq's present internal situation and foreign policies contrast sharply with those of other Arab states. Under the control of a long-established oligarchy of professional politicians, wealthy landlords, businessmen, and tribal leaders, Iraq has exhibited in recent years a degree of political stability uncommon in the Arab world, where the tide of revolutionary nationalism has toppled several regimes and brought political turbulence to others. Of the principal Arab states, Iraq alone has both extensive economic assets and a sound development program already well under way. Its oil reserves were estimated at 20 billion barrels in 1955 — some 16 percent of total Middle East reserves — and in addition it has large areas of undeveloped agricultural land. As a result, despite the extreme poverty of most of its population of some five million, its long-range economic possibilities are bright. Finally, Iraq is the only independent Arab state which has elected openly to cooperate with Western defense efforts in the Middle East — a decision manifested by its adherence to the Baghdad Pact in February 1955.

7. Iraq's current political stability and pro-West orientation are in great part the work of its dominant figure, the 68-year-old prime minister, Nuri Said. Once an officer of the Ottoman Army, Nuri became a leader in the Arab nationalist revolt against the Ottoman Empire, and aided the British against Turkish forces in World War I. He has ever since maintained a close working relationship with the UK, in the belief that British support was essential to the security of the Hashimite dynasty, whose cause has his loyalty.<sup>2</sup> He has been the most powerful leader in Iraq, whether actually holding office or not, for much of the time since 1932 when the coun-

try achieved independence following the expiration of the British mandate. Some political power is also exercised by the royal family, which is nominally headed by the 20-year-old King Faisal II, but still dominated by the former regent, the king's uncle, Crown Prince Abdul Ilah. Although other important political figures exist, and certain of them, including opponents of Nuri, continue to enjoy considerable influence, Nuri has largely suppressed organized opposition, banned political parties, and ensured a pliant parliament by rigged elections.

### I. THE OUTLOOK FOR INTERNAL STABILITY

#### The Political Scene

8. Nuri's political strength and acumen make it likely that he can continue to dominate the Iraqi scene as long as he remains active. Among the comparatively small number of politically conscious Iraqis, there is considerable discontent with the present regime's domestic performance and with Nuri's long monopoly of power, but the opposition is splintered, intimidated, and weakened by deep-seated incompatibilities between various individual leaders and groups. Moreover, Nuri remains adept at keeping his opponents on the defensive by a well-tryed combination of firm security controls and a monopoly of political patronage. The various banned political parties continue to exist with the govern-

<sup>2</sup> Iraq's dynasty is of the Hashimite family, a branch of which also holds the throne of Jordan. After the Hashimites had been ousted from Syria by the French, when the latter received the League of Nations mandate for Syria and Lebanon in 1920, the Hashimite monarchies in Iraq and Jordan were established by the British in return for the efforts of the Hashimites in leading the Arab revolt against the Turks during World War I.

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ment's tacit consent, but their activities are limited, and Nuri's effective use of the army and police deprives the more extreme opposition elements of their one effective means of exerting pressure — the street demonstration.

9. At present, about the only recourse available to Nuri's opponents, in their efforts to unseat him, is that of persuasion and intrigue at the Palace. There they seek to exploit the grievances of Crown Prince Abdul Ilah, whose political activities have been severely restricted by Nuri. At present, however, Abdul Ilah is aware that Nuri has the upper hand, and is unlikely to risk a test of strength with the premier.

10. In these circumstances, even if Nuri elects to step down as prime minister — as he has voluntarily done on occasion before — he would probably be able to name his successor or at least to block the appointment of a candidate unacceptable to him. Iraq has a number of political leaders, including several former prime ministers, who generally accept Nuri's policies or differ only in minor degree, and who might be selected to succeed him. These include followers of Nuri's (such as Khalil Kannah, related to Nuri and a member of his cabinet) and certain independents or members of what might be called the "loyal opposition" (such as Fadil Jamali, a sometime protegee of Nuri's who has close relations with the Palace, and the leader of the Umma Party, Salih Jabr). The more extreme opposition leaders, such as Faiq Samarrai of the nationalist Istiqlal Party, and Kamil Chadirchi of the leftist National Democratic Party, are unacceptable to Nuri, and his ban on political parties has been enforced with particular stringency against them as well as against the Communists.

11. So long as Nuri dominates the scene, the domestic policies of the Iraqi government will continue to reflect the conservative views of Iraq's traditional ruling oligarchy. Radical measures of internal reform are not likely to be undertaken. Political freedoms will remain limited; a certain amount of corruption in government ministries will be tolerated; and although constructive results will emerge from the development program, strong conservative

opposition will continue to delay tax and land tenure reforms designed to maximize the program's benefits.

12. Iraq will probably continue to have the kind of stability suggested above so long as Nuri remains on the scene. If he should decide temporarily to give up the office of premier in favor of an acceptable successor, there would probably be some increase in overt opposition to the government — both in the form of criticism by dissident political leaders and of attempts to use mass pressure tactics, e. g., street demonstrations, against the regime. With Nuri in the background, however, these would probably not be allowed to get out of hand.

13. Nuri's death or incapacitation would remove a major source of governmental strength and authority. A many-sided scramble for power would almost certainly ensue — involving the Palace and a number of individuals — both moderate and extremist — who aspire to succeed Nuri as Iraq's political arbiter. Iraq's political parties are at best weak organizations held together by individual leaders, and would disappear or be combined as the leaders maneuvered for personal advantage.

14. In this complex political maneuvering, even the Iraqi army — which by Arab standards has been outstandingly nonpolitical in recent years — might become involved. There is no evidence of a revolutionary-minded military clique among Iraqi officers — such as that which overthrew King Farouk in Egypt — and Iraq's ruling family is in any case more popular than Farouk. However, such a group would be likely to emerge — probably with Egyptian and Saudi encouragement — if the government's vigilance should be relaxed.

15. The eventual outcome of such an internal power struggle cannot be clearly foreseen. Initially at least, the odds are in favor of control remaining in the hands of the conservatives or moderates. The influence of the Palace — which might even increase for a period when no longer overshadowed by Nuri — would probably constitute for some time to come an effective barrier to extremist

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efforts to gain power. In time, however, the prestige and influence of the Palace might be eroded, especially since Egypt would probably exploit any opportunities offered by the situation to encourage antimonarchial elements.

16. It is probable that any government in the circumstances just described would be considerably less stable than the present one. No foreseeable successor to Nuri appears to possess the latter's ability to keep his own supporters and the "loyal opposition" in line, while also firmly suppressing dissident extremists. A moderate or conservative regime would not only be weakened by internal rivalries, but would almost certainly be less effective than the present one in coping with extremist pressures, including those from the fellow-traveling National Democratic Party, the extreme Arab nationalist Istiqlal Party, and the Communists. It would be confronted with the dilemma of continuing Nuri's policy of suppressing extremist groups—thereby adding to their bitterness—or of allowing them greater freedom of expression at the price of increasing political turbulence and legal or illegal challenges to conservative or moderate control. Even though such extremist opposition is sharply divided, it has in the past united for political purposes on a common ground of Arab nationalism and anti-Westernism, which found considerable response among urban elements. It could easily do so again if given the chance.

17. Iraq's Communist Party has been the object of firm repressive measures by Nuri's government. As a result, its leaders are in jail or in hiding, and its numerical strength has been reduced to some 600 members and 2,000 active supporters at present. The party attracts its followers principally from the young urban intelligentsia and industrial workers in the port cities and oil industry centers. The Communists are not likely to exert any very significant influence so long as the regime persists in its present measures of suppression. If given the chance by the government, however, the Communists could probably develop some potential for creating industrial disturbances, and would seek to create a national front of opposition parties.

## Economics and Stability

18. The financial position of the Iraqi government is strong—largely owing to annual oil revenues from the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) which are now in excess of \$206 million per year and which give Iraq a favorable balance of payments position.<sup>3</sup> Seventy percent of the government's direct annual oil revenues is earmarked for development purposes under a program first started in 1951 and which is to involve the expenditure of more than \$1.4 billion in the period 1955–1960. This program is administered by the Iraq Development Board, which has a British and an American as well as Iraqi members. The program embraces major flood control and irrigation projects as well as the creation of public health, housing, and educational facilities.

19. While certain of the achievements of Iraq's development program have been impressive (notably in the fields of flood control and irrigation), the program is essentially long range in character and has so far had but limited impact on the living standards of the great bulk of the population—about 80 percent of which ekes out a meager livelihood in agricultural or nomadic pursuits. The majority of the unskilled urban laboring classes live in extreme poverty. The growing group of white collar workers, students, and professional people in the cities of Iraq are increasingly frustrated because the development program has not opened up sufficient opportunities of the type which appeals to this class of urban Arabs—for example in law, politics, and bureaucracy. They are also impatient at the lack of dramatic progress in bringing the appurtenances of modern industrialism to Iraq.

<sup>3</sup>The Iraq Petroleum Company is owned jointly by the British Petroleum Company (formerly Anglo-Iranian) (23.75%); Royal Dutch Shell (23.75%); Compagnie Francaise des Petroles (23.75%); Standard Oil of New Jersey (11.75%); Socony Mobil (11.75%); and C. S. Gulbenkian estates (5%). The IPC and its subsidiaries now hold concessions covering all of Iraq as well as concessions in several principalities of the Persian Gulf.

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20. Numerically, these urban groups do not bulk large in Iraq's overwhelmingly rural population, but their attitudes are particularly significant for the future or Iraq's political stability. It is in the cities — Baghdad and the oil industry and port centers — that political consciousness is most developed, and that mass pressure tactics, such as strikes and street demonstrations, can be used against the government by dissident extremists. The rural population remains largely illiterate, tradition-minded, politically apathetic, and inclined to accept traditional leadership and government direction.

21. The prospects for eventually alleviating at least some of the economic sources of discontent in Iraq appear reasonably good. Certain of the basic objectives of the development program — long range flood control projects on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, for example — are beginning to yield tangible results; and the next few years will probably witness some expansion of health, educational, and housing facilities and other improvements both in Iraq's cities and in the countryside. Moreover, the Development Board itself is showing increasing awareness of the need to publicize the program and to initiate some projects designed to have favorable impact in the cities.

22. Iraq's development program will not of itself, however, assure conditions of political stability. At best it provides Iraqi leaders with a promising basis on which to work. In the politically conscious cities, extremist opponents of moderate or conservative rule in Iraq will find the real or fancied failings of the development program useful in exploiting popular frustrations. However, such opposition efforts will probably be focused more on the foreign policies of Iraq's present leadership than on domestic issues.

### Position of the Iraq Petroleum Company

23. The IPC's position appears at least as secure as that of the other major oil concessions in the Middle East. The regime was confronted with strong pressures to nationalize oil operations at the time Iran started to do so in 1951, but Nuri resisted these pres-

ures and instead secured price and other concessions from the company as liberal as any in the area. Iran's subsequent troubles provided an object lesson which is not lost on the responsible leaders in Iraq. Moreover, the IPC itself continues to demonstrate outstanding political skill and economic astuteness in its relations with the government, its Iraqi employees, and the public generally. Finally, by contrast with Saudi Arabia, Iraq has devoted the greater part of the revenues accruing from oil operations to public improvement projects, a practice which tends to strengthen the company's public position.

24. In these circumstances, the chief potential dangers to the IPC would arise in the event of an extremist take over of the Iraqi government or of a general retreat by Western oil and other interests in the Middle East as a whole in the face of nationalist hostility. Either development would intensify pressures for greater concessions from the company, and probably for nationalization. Barring such crises, the IPC's principal difficulties will probably arise from occasional strikes involving some Communist infiltration, and recurring problems with Syria and Lebanon over oil transit rights. In any event, the company will almost certainly find it necessary to grant to Iraq at least the substance of any concessions yielded by Western interests to other Middle East oil-producing states.

## II. FOREIGN AFFAIRS OUTLOOK

25. While responsibility for Iraq's present foreign policies is primarily Nuri's, there has been a substantial measure of agreement among his own followers, the Palace, and the "loyal opposition" on the general nature of Iraq's foreign interests. In brief, the Iraqi regime's foreign policy is characterized by: (a) a dependence on the UK (and increasingly on the US as well) for support of Iraq and the Hashimite dynasty against Egypt and Saudi Arabia; (b) adherence to Arab League policies of hostility toward Israel and toward the vestiges of imperialism (particularly French imperialism) in the Middle East; (c) an appreciation — rare in the Arab world — of the threat of Soviet imperialism;

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and (d) a desire to increase Iraqi influence in the Arab world, particularly in Syria.

### Relations With the West

26. Virtually all of Iraq's conservative and moderate leaders agreed on the desirability of terminating the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1932 — under which the UK maintained airbases and other military facilities in Iraq — as no longer compatible with Iraq's sovereignty and nationalist sensibilities. Yet most of them also desired to obtain greater material benefits from closer association with the US and to preserve defense ties with the West against the Soviet threat, a desire which has probably been strengthened by Soviet arming of Egypt and Syria. As a result, Iraq's adherence to the Baghdad Pact had the support of Jabr, Jamali, and a number of other former prime ministers representing various shades of conservative and moderate political thinking.

27. In general, these leaders have given Nuri their support against the violent Egyptian and Saudi propaganda attacks leveled at himself and the Iraqi government for entering the Baghdad Pact. Indeed, Egyptian efforts to topple the Nuri government immediately after it signed the Baghdad Pact not only failed but backfired; a widespread feeling among even normally anti-Nuri elements that this was going too far evoked for a time something closer to real national unity than is usually seen in Iraq.

28. During the past year or more, however, Iraq has experienced an increasingly uncomfortable sense of isolation from its sister Arab states. The feeling is widespread among politically aware Iraqis, apart from a handful of top leaders, that alliances with the UK and other non-Arab powers are incompatible with the ideal of Arab solidarity. Misgivings over the Baghdad Pact among influential persons, including those who initially approved Iraq's adherence to it, are growing. In part, opposition to the Baghdad Pact is simply a cynical device for political attacks on Nuri — since Iraq's association with the Pact is increasingly coming to be identified as his personal handiwork. There is, however, real concern over the split which the Pact

has occasioned in the Arab world and alarm over the success of the ESS<sup>4</sup> campaign against the Baghdad Pact. Nuri was particularly disturbed by the failure of efforts to secure Jordan's adherence to the Pact, considering it important that at least one other Arab state join Iraq in the arrangement in order to avoid the stigma that Iraq had "sold out" the Arab cause to the West. Among firm supporters of the Pact, including Nuri and the influential Chief of Staff, General Arif, there is dissatisfaction over the scarcity of tangible benefits from Pact membership as compared with the arms and other offers which Egypt received from the Soviet Bloc.

29. Despite these misgivings and setbacks, neither domestic criticism nor outside Arab pressures are likely to result in a drastic revision of Iraqi foreign policy so long as Nuri dominates the scene. He is himself probably too committed to a broad policy of collaboration with the West, too conscious of the threat of Soviet imperialism, and too hostile toward the regimes of Egypt and Saudi Arabia to take Iraq into the ESS camp or to flirt dangerously with the Soviet Bloc.

30. Nevertheless, if the Soviet-supported ESS campaign to isolate Iraq continues to enjoy the success it has recently had, and Iraq fails to receive convincing evidences of countervailing benefits from membership in the Baghdad Pact, Nuri's position will become increasingly difficult. If sufficiently frustrated, he might attempt to force the issue by various pressure tactics which have served him in the past. He is capable, for example of turning over the government to weaker and less pro-Western hands, or of allowing mob demonstrations against the West — tactics aimed at extracting concessions from the Western backers of the Baghdad Pact on the grounds that they are necessary to preserve his position and to satisfy local opinion.

31. The Iraqi government urgently desires greater US support for the Baghdad Pact, being convinced that the UK alone is not capable of leading the defense of the area or of providing sufficient economic and politi-

<sup>4</sup> "ESS" refers to the states of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

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cal support to render the Pact effective. Nuri would probably not resort to the pressure tactics described above so long as he sees a chance of gaining increased US backing through his present policy of cooperation. Nevertheless, the US will be confronted with persistent and probably increasing Iraqi demands for stronger US backing and early adherence to the Pact, as well as for stepped-up military and economic aid. The Iraqi government will probably urge the US to take these steps on the grounds that the Pact would be ineffective without them, that Iraq must show tangible benefits both at home and in the area from membership in the Pact, and that in any case the US owes greater support to nations which side with the West than to the neutralist states.

32. In these efforts, Iraq can count on the firm backing of the UK. The British will make strenuous efforts to assure a continuation of their still-extensive influence with Nuri and Iraq's ruling oligarchy, and to protect the extensive British oil and other commercial interests in Iraq. Indeed, one of the present dangers to the UK in Iraq is that its efforts in these respects may prove so heavy-handed as to produce adverse reactions not only among anti-Western extremists but also among elements normally friendly to the British. The UK will also support Iraq's efforts in other parts of the Arab world to counter Egyptian and Saudi influence, though the British may oppose extreme Iraqi measures in Syria and Jordan, for example, in the belief that the risks involved would be justified only in the event of dire emergency.

33. On the whole the British position in Iraq is likely to remain reasonably strong at least so long as Nuri or another of Iraq's present conservative or moderate leaders controls the government. During this period, the UK will probably continue to enjoy certain limited rights of access, on the basis of the Baghdad Pact, to the air fields and other military facilities in Iraq which it formerly controlled. While some leaders would prefer to see the US replace the UK as the principal Western power in Iraq, these men are likely to work for their objectives not through a weakening of UK-Iraqi ties but through a strengthening

of Iraq's relations with the US. Their efforts may stimulate a certain amount of British concern that the US will supersede the UK in Iraq.

34. When Nuri goes, Iraq will be more likely to alter its foreign policy in the name of "Arab unity" and in the direction of Egyptian-type neutralism. Since a successor regime would probably be less firm and adroit than Nuri in suppressing nationalist, neutralist, and anti-Western elements among the opposition, its freedom to continue Iraq's present foreign policies would be subject to internal pressures and crises which Nuri contrives to neutralize or avoid. Iraq would probably not, under any foreseeable conservative or moderate successor, actually withdraw from the Baghdad Pact. Such a step would constitute too clear a capitulation to Egypt and Saudi Arabia on the part of the prestige-conscious Iraqis. Nevertheless, the likelihood would be increased that Iraq would gradually de-emphasize its role to the point where its participation would be virtually nil. The chances of Iraq pursuing such a course would be substantially lessened if in the meantime another Arab state joined the Baghdad Pact or if additional Western support for the Pact resulted in increased benefits to Iraq.

35. Under Nuri or any foreseeable successor, Iraq will remain essentially hostile to France, not only out of sympathy for the Arab nationalist cause in North Africa, but also because of the Hashimite dynasty's rivalry with France for a special position in Syria, from which the French ousted the Hashimites in 1920. Anti-French feeling does not, however, preclude limited cooperation with the French aimed at excluding Egyptian influence from Morocco.

### Relations With the Other Arab States

36. The outlook is for continuing tensions in Iraq's relations with Egypt which will profoundly affect Iraq's relations with all the Arab states. Egypt, with Soviet support, will almost certainly continue its efforts to undermine the Baghdad Pact and to strengthen its influence in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon at Iraq's expense. Iraq, on its part, will continue its efforts to enlist Morocco as an anti-

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Egyptian ally and to supplant or block Egyptian influence in Libya. Even outright Iraqi capitulation to the Egyptian line of Arab foreign policy, or the coming to power of an Iraqi government more inclined than Nuri's to make concessions in the name of "Arab unity," would create only superficial improvements in relations between the two countries; their long-standing rivalry for influence in the Arab world would continue to be a source of tensions between them. Moreover, a weaker Iraqi government than that of Nuri would probably be confronted with stepped-up Egyptian and Saudi efforts to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

37. Anything more than a superficial rapprochement between Iraq and Saudi Arabia is also unlikely. Saudi hostility toward the Baghdad Pact will remain one source of tensions, but an even more fundamental one is the deep-seated hostility between the Saudi regime and the Hashimite dynasty of Iraq.<sup>5</sup> The Saudis will almost certainly remain basically opposed to any expansion of the prestige or influence of the Hashimite dynasty of Iraq, and fearful of any developments — such as a strengthening of the Baghdad Pact — which promise to strengthen Iraq or to extend its influence in the Arab world. The focal points of contention between Iraq and the Saudis will be Syria and Jordan, where the Saudis will probably continue to work with Egypt in its campaign to undermine Iraqi influence.

38. In the struggle for influence in Syria and Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have enjoyed certain advantages over Iraq. Syrians and

<sup>5</sup> This dynastic enmity originated in the bitter political and religious rivalry between the Saudis — leaders of the puritanical Wahhabi movement of Islam — and the Kingdom of the Hejaz which was founded by the Hashimites with British support in World War I. The Saudis not only resented control of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina by what they regarded as religious backsliders, but also feared that the Hashimite King Hussein would attempt, possibly with British support, to extend his rule throughout the Arabian peninsula. In 1925, Ibn Saud ejected the Hashimites from the Hejaz. Ever since, each side has suspected the other (with some justice) of hostile intentions.

West Bank Jordanians had been conditioned to fear Hashimite expansionism in the long struggle against the "Greater Syria" scheme of Hashimite King Abdullah of Jordan. Saudi Arabia and Egypt have made much more vigorous efforts to advance their interests than has Iraq, which has exhibited a reluctance to match the expenditure of Saudi funds or to carry on as vigorous a political and propaganda campaign as that of Egypt. In addition, pro-Iraqi elements in both Syria and Jordan have shown themselves too disunited and dispirited to serve as an effective basis for Iraqi political and propaganda efforts to offset those of Egypt and the Saudis. The latter two states, moreover, have had considerable success in exploiting existing anti-Western and anti-Israeli sentiments in Syria and Jordan, using the line that the Baghdad Pact is an "imperialist" plot conceived in the interests of the West and of Israel. A continuation of recent trends in Syria and Jordan would undermine what remains of Iraqi influence in those two states, isolate Iraq in the Arab world, and bring an end to its long-standing aspirations for a drawing together of the northern Arab states under Iraqi leadership.<sup>6</sup>

39. There are indications that Iraq is becoming increasingly perturbed over political developments in Syria and Jordan. Iraq will probably feel compelled to step up its heretofore rather limited overt and covert efforts to reverse anti-Iraqi trends in Syria. Its prospects for stemming the decline of Iraqi influence through political and diplomatic activities appear greater in Jordan than in Syria, since the latter is already closely tied to the ESS bloc, while the former — at least as long as King Hussein remains on the throne — will probably continue actively to seek ties with Iraq as well as the ESS states.

<sup>6</sup> Syria has long been the object of various Iraqi plans for a union or confederation — often called the "Fertile Crescent" plan. Nuri himself put forward one such proposal officially in 1943; and Crown Prince Abdul Ilah has consistently pressed for the idea as a means of extending his own prestige and that of the Hashimite dynasty. Iraqi interest in Jordan results from the latter's position as a sister monarchy also under Hashimite rule.

40. The Iraqi government has given occasional indications of a desire to intervene militarily in Syria, and it could probably count on Turkish material support for such an effort. On balance, however, we believe that Iraq is not likely to intervene militarily in Syria unless convinced that this would be the only way of preventing a take over of Syria by militantly anti-Iraqi elements. It might also intervene in Jordan in the event of an imminent threat to the Hashimite throne; such action could be justified by the terms of the 1947 Iraqi-Jordanian treaty. Even in these circumstances, however, the international implications of military intervention would be so serious that Iraq would be unlikely to risk it without the backing of substantial political and military elements within Syria or Jordan, or without prior consultation with the UK and probably the US. It is possible, though unlikely, that if Iraq received the backing of such elements within Syria or Jordan, it might attempt intervention in the expectation that the US and UK would feel compelled to extend their support even though their prior commitment had not been obtained.

41. A final possibility of Iraqi military action to foster Iraqi influence in Syria and Jordan would arise in the event of an Arab-Israeli war. In contributing military support to the Arab cause, the Iraqis would probably use the opportunity to extend Iraqi influence in Syria and Jordan.

### **Iraq and Israel**

42. Iraq sometimes appears less hostile to Israel than do other Arab states. Israel and Iraq have no common boundary, and over one-third of Iraq's population is either non-Arab or non-Moslem and comparatively indifferent to the Israeli question. However, the bulk of politically conscious Iraqis, including most of the ruling group, share the general Arab attitude on the question and indeed sometimes feel compelled to prove — by expressions of extreme hostility toward Israel — that they have not sold out to the West. In these circumstances, Iraq is unlikely to depart from the policies of the Arab League as a whole on the Israeli issue. If the other Arab states

moved toward some form of settlement, Iraq would go along, but it is highly unlikely to take the initiative itself. In the meantime, its leaders will probably continue to demonstrate their devotion to the Arab cause by public expressions of hostility to Israel and readiness to fight on the Arab side. In addition, they will attempt to persuade other Arab states that the Baghdad Pact is a form of securing protection against Israel as well as against the USSR, and will continue to press for a more pro-Arab policy on the part of their Baghdad Pact partners and the US.

### **Relations With the Sino-Soviet Bloc**

43. Iraq's diplomatic and commercial relations with the states of the Sino-Soviet Bloc are for practical purposes nonexistent. The government is deeply concerned by the threat of Soviet imperialism as well as by the domestic dangers of Communism. As long as the Bloc continues its strong opposition to the Baghdad Pact, and its support to Egypt and Syria, the present regime will probably not be responsive to any Soviet advances which may be made.

### **III. MILITARY OUTLOOK**

44. The Iraqi army numbers some 53,000 men.<sup>7</sup> Equipment, which is largely British, is for the most part obsolescent. Iraq is currently receiving considerable new materiel from the UK and from the US, the latter under a Military Assistance Agreement signed in 1954. The Iraqi air force has four fighter squadrons, including 23 jet and 40 piston fighters. Both the ground and air forces have been trained by the British, with some recent US MAAG participation in the case of the ground forces. For internal security purposes, the army and air force are supplemented by a mobile police force of some 4,000 men, organized into nine battalions with headquarters at Baghdad.

45. While Iraq's military forces are reasonably well-trained and equipped by Middle East

<sup>7</sup> It is organized into an infantry division, a mountain division, a provisional division, and supporting units, including 1 tank squadron, 2 field artillery regiments, and 1 antitank and 1 anti-aircraft regiment.

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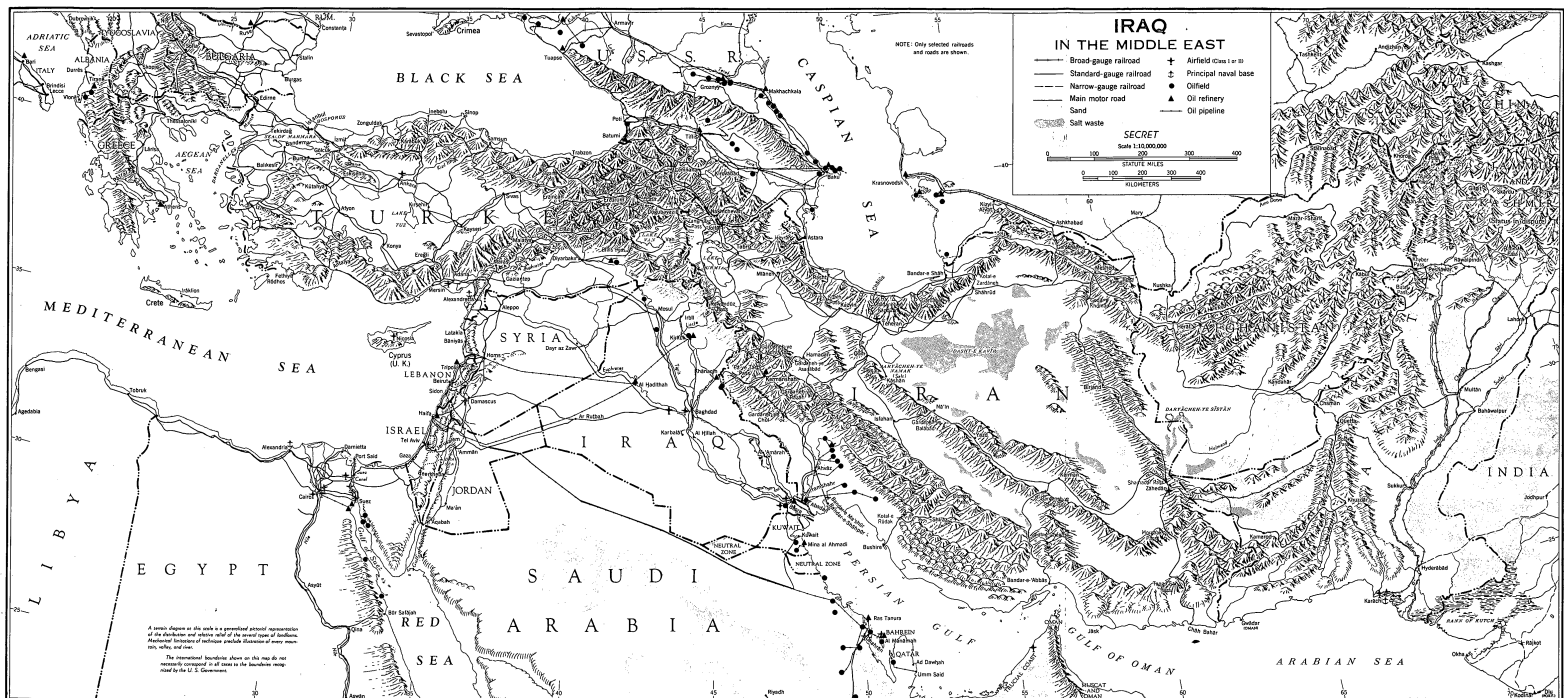
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standards, their present capabilities do not go much beyond the maintenance of internal security. They could resist an invasion by any Arab state, but the army is incapable of supplying and supporting more than one infantry brigade outside of Iraq without endangering its ability to maintain internal security at home. Against a Soviet invasion, the Iraqi army could at present offer no more than minor harassing action.

46. Some improvement in the planning proficiency and training standards, as well as the

equipment, of the Iraqi army and air force will probably result from Iraq's participation in the Baghdad Pact. However, any substantial increase in the military value of the Iraqi forces to the "northern tier" grouping would require several years of UK or US military assistance and training support at considerably higher levels than the present ones. In the meantime, the primary military value of Iraq to the "northern tier" arrangement lies in the availability of certain of its base facilities to the Western Powers.

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